

Mr. Bryan's Birthday Dinner

"Birthday Dinner to the Hon. William Jennings Bryan, Given by His Friends and Admirers in New York City and Vicinity, at the Aldine Club, 200 Fifth Avenue, New York City, March, nineteenth, nineteen-twenty.

"Committee—Samuel Seabury, Royal S. Copeland, Cornelius M. Sheehan, Francis P. Bent, Charles H. Ingersoll, J. W. Hughes, George A. Carden, Robert S. Doubleday, George W. Thompson, Charles Johnson Post, John W. Cox.

"Woman's honorary committee—Mrs. Lillian R. Sire, Mrs. Royal S. Copeland, Mrs. J. W. Hughes, Mrs. Norah D. McCally, Mrs. Ery E. Kehaya, Mrs. John J. Boylan, Dr. Anna W. Hochfelder, Mrs. Berkeley Davaney, Mrs. Pauline O. Field, Miss Bertha Taub."

The above is quoted from the menu used on the occasion described to which should be added that six hundred assembled, in spite of typical March weather and made the guest of honor glad by their cordial greetings and congratulations. A birthday cake 36 inches by 24 inches dimensions, lighted by 60 red, white and blue candles concluded the feast. The formality of blowing out the candles was turned over to the ladies, one from each table, each lady keeping her candle as a souvenir.

Father O'Callaghan, of the Catholic University, at Washington, and for many years an intimate personal and political friend of Mr. Bryan's, delivered the invocation, after which the famous Paulist Choir rendered several selections.

Below will be found the speeches of Judge Seabury and Mr. Bryan—unfortunately The Commoner has no report of the remarks of Rev. Charles Scanlon, President of the American branch of the Dry Federation of the World; Hon. Bird L. Coler, Commissioner of Charities; Mrs. Boole, President New York W. C. T. U.; Mrs. Sire, and Hon. Wayne B. Wheeler, General Counsel for National Anti-saloon League.

MR. SEABURY'S SPEECH

(Part of Speech of Hon. Samuel Seabury, Formerly Judge of the Court of Appeals of New York and Democratic Candidate for Governor in 1916. Delivered at Birthday Banquet to Hon. William Jennings Bryan at the Aldine Club, New York City, March 19th, 1920.)

A situation has arisen by reason of the action of leaders of the Democratic party of this state, which calls for comment.

Silence upon the subject would be construed as the equivalent of acquiescence in the action taken.

The action at the recent convention of the Democratic party, at Albany, reflects so seriously upon the party in this state as to call for unequivocal protest and dissent.

Prohibition is now the law of the land. Before its enactment there was room for difference of opinion in relation to it. Now that it has been enacted as a direct result of constitutional amendment, it must be fairly enforced just as other laws are enforced. The attempt to make it appear that the law can be immediately repealed or evaded is an exhibition of chicanery and fraud, to which the Democratic party ought not to stoop.

The action taken by the Democratic State convention was an exhibition of cheap politics, which will fool nobody and serves only to demonstrate that its present leaders are bidding for the financial support of the liquor interests.

I believe that the action taken is contrary to the wishes of a majority of the people of this state. In declaring for the repeal of a law which has just been enacted and favoring a policy of lax enforcement, the leadership which now controls the Democratic party has again demonstrated that it is out of sympathy with the sentiment of the nation. That sentiment will be declared in the platform adopted at San Francisco next June, and it will not be in favor of the views adopted by the convention which met at Albany.

In July or August, this state will witness the spectacle of the leaders of the Democratic party

meeting in convention and adopting a platform directly opposite to that which they adopted at Albany.

The present leaders of the Democratic party in this state have, at the dictation of the liquor interests, adopted a platform which misrepresents the sentiment of the party and the state.

Instead of committing the party to policies in accord with those to which the party and the nation have subscribed, they have sought to segregate New York state and commit it to a doctrine which sanctions the disregard of law or the lax enforcement of law.

At the present moment there is nothing more needed than a respect for, and observance of, the law. No political party should champion the evasion of existing law.

The question as to the enforcement of the law presents an issue greater than prohibition. It is the issue of law and order. It is not a religious issue. Protestants and Catholics stand shoulder to shoulder for the enforcement of existing law.

It is only the present leaders of the Democratic party in the state, whose distinguishing characteristic is their abnormal stupidity, who have the temerity to attempt to commit their party to the wrong side of this issue.

The act of the convention was typical of the leadership which now afflicts the party in this state.

It was done for no other purpose than to deceive the public and to win the support of the liquor interests which have long been a corrupt influence in our politics.

It seeks to have New York proclaim itself an outlaw state which fails to enforce a federal law which is applicable alike to every state in the union.

It is an indirect and, therefore, cowardly attempt at nullification, which the citizenship of this state will repudiate. The Civil war settled that question forever for America.

It seeks to commit this state to a policy which the state itself repudiated when it ratified the Prohibition amendment. It will be offensive to a great majority of this state.

The Democratic party will not tolerate it.

The Republican party, with the exception of that part of it which follows Senator Wadsworth, will not tolerate it.

The section of the Republican party which follows Senator Wadsworth would stand for anything which the Republican machine wants, whether it be the control of the liquor interests or the abolition of woman suffrage.

If the politicians find that they can immediately repeal the Prohibition amendment, which has just been adopted, they will be tempted to inaugurate a new crusade to repeal the Suffrage amendment.

It is a great pity that the leaders of both parties in this state cannot unite upon their platform of repeal and come out openly for the repeal of prohibition, woman suffrage, liberty of speech and press, and the right of the people to elect their own legislators.

Such a reactionary platform would express the real views of the leaders of both of the existing political machines.

I have ventured to speak upon this subject on this occasion because I think it due to the Democratic party, of which our guest is one of the honored leaders, that he should know that there are in this state many Democrats who do not propose to submit to having the position of the party upon this issue misrepresented, as our state leaders have endeavored to misrepresent it, and also to give these sham leaders fair notice that, in their efforts to commit the party to an attitude that favors the nullification of a federal law, they will encounter the active opposition of those of us who believe in the supremacy of the law.

BEWARE OF THE DAM

(Abstract of address delivered by William Jennings Bryan at Birthday Dinner in New York City, March 19th, 1920.)

Mr. Toastmaster and Friends:

I know not how I can better manifest my profound appreciation of the kindly greetings called forth by this, the sixtieth anniversary of

my birth, than to avail myself of the privilege of age and submit some conclusions drawn from thirty years of experience in the arena of politics. My father taught me to believe that, in a land like ours, the science of government is a noble science, worthy of the thought of every citizen. That science grows in importance as the government becomes more popular. To understand it, one needs to know only human nature and the principles that underlie representative government.

The lesson that I deem most important for this occasion can best be presented by an illustration familiar to all. The running stream obeys an irresistible law that draws its waters onward to the sea. No dam can long obstruct its course; why? Because the water that rises behind the dam, automatically accumulates the force necessary to remove the obstruction which impedes its progress. Those who live on the banks of the stream are vitally interested in preventing any interference with the flow because the temporary damage caused by the stream when it sweeps away the dam will be in proportion to its height.

CIVILIZATION IS A RUNNING STREAM AND CAN NO MORE BE DAMMED THAN THE CURRENT OF A MIGHTY RIVER. If the people's will is obstructed the force that accumulates behind the barrier is the guaranty that it will be removed. If temporary damage is done in the transition from the abnormal condition, caused by the obstruction, to the normal condition of progress, the blame is not upon those who remove the fetters placed upon the people's will, but upon those who are foolish enough to deny the right of the people to have what they want in government. And here, too, the temporary damage done is in proportion to the obstruction which finally gives way before the forward movement of the masses.

We can better understand the political situation which we have to meet today if we bear in mind three propositions: First, that greed and selfishness are always attempting to obstruct human progress; Second, that the sooner an obstruction to the popular will is removed, the better for all concerned; Third, right always triumphs in the end.

Just now the world is recovering from the most destructive war known to history. The loss of life and the damage to property were appalling. Arbitrary power had attempted to dam the stream that flows toward universal democracy. It required the combined energy of the progressive forces of the world to clear the stream and permit the onward sweep of the current. In time the world will be normal again, and God grant that the lessons learned in the awful conflict may never be forgotten. We have learned at least one lesson, namely, that it is a mistake to require a two-thirds vote to ratify a treaty. A majority of Congress can declare war; it ought to be as easy to end a war as to begin it. The League of Nations, with our nation a member, is the highest tribunal that has been conceived by the mind and heart of man, and our nation's influence in the League should go far toward making war impossible by cultivating the spirit of brotherhood. Our nation's representatives in the League should be elected in districts by popular vote.

In each nation the obstructionists and the advocates of reform are engaged in a continuing struggle. It so happens that my life has been spent in successive efforts to secure reforms, every one of which, in its last analysis, has had as its object the removal of obstructions which special interests sought to interpose to the political progress of our country.

The first was a constitutional amendment which provided for the direct election of United States senators by the people. Predatory wealth was using the old method of electing senators for the purpose of making that body the bulwark of privilege. It required 21 years to clear the stream and let the people's will flow on unimpeded. The House passed the necessary resolution six times before it could pass the Senate once. But who would now return to the old system? And what would be the situation today if this reform had not been secured?

It required seventeen years to secure an amendment to the Constitution authorizing an income tax. A supreme court decision obstructed the stream, and wealth was profiting by exemption from its share of the burdens of the government. How could our government have distributed with equity the burdens of the war with-